

**METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR EMBEDDED, AUTOMATED, COMPONENT-
LEVEL CONTROL OF COMPUTER SYSTEMS AND OTHER COMPLEX
SYSTEMS**

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Abstract Of The Disclosure

10 A method and system for protecting and controlling personal computers ("PCs")
and components installed in or attached to PCs. The method and system may be used to
protect PCs from use after being stolen. An exemplary embodiment of the system
includes a server running on a remote computer and hardware-implemented agents
15 embedded within the circuitry that controls the various devices within a PC. The agents
intercept all communications to and from the devices into which they are embedded,
passing the communications when authorized to do so, and blocking communications
when not authorized, effectively disabling the devices. Embedded agents are
continuously authorized from the remote server computer by handshake operations
20 implemented as communications messages. When the PC is stolen or otherwise
disconnected from the remote server, the embedded agents within the PC fail to receive
further authorizations, disable the devices into which they are embedded, and effectively
prevent any use of the stolen or disconnected PC. The method and system may also be
used to control and manage access to software stored within the PC and to control and
manage operation of hardware and software components within the PC.

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